



**Rachel Carson Reserve  
Local Advisory Committee Meeting  
May 17, 2016, 3:30p  
101 Pivers Island Road, Beaufort**

**Attendance**

<b><u>LAC Partner Organization Members</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
Town of Beaufort Administration, Charlie Burgess	Yes
Town of Beaufort Police Department	No
Fort Macon State Park	No
North Carolina Maritime Museum-Beaufort, Ben Wunderly	Yes
<b><u>Community Members and Community Organizations Members</u></b>	
Perry Barrow	Yes
Ann Carter	No
John Fussell	Yes
Stan Rule	Yes
Robin Newton	Yes
Dan Rittschof	No
Margaret Garner	No
<b><u>Others Present</u></b>	
Paula Gillikin, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR, Central Sites Manager	
Brandon Puckett, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR, Research Coordinator	
Rebecca Ellin, DCM/NCCR & NCNERR, Reserve Program Manager	
Mike Lopazanski, DCM, Policy & Planning Section Chief	
Ken Richardson, DCM, Shoreline Management Specialist	
Rodney Guajardo, DCM, NCCR & NCNERR, GIS Specialist	
Members of the public (13)	

**Reserve Administrative Update (Rebecca Ellin via Paula Gillikin)**

- Staffing News***  
 Scott Crocker, Northern Sites Manager for the Coastal Reserve, left the Division in March to take a position with NC State Parks as the State Trail Program Manager. Scott was with our program for 3 years and made significant progress in advancing the protection and management of the Currituck Banks, Kitty Hawk Woods, and Buxton Woods Coastal Reserves. We wish Scott well in his new endeavors. The vacant position will be posted this week.

- *Legislative Update*

The N.C. Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve was impacted by two sections in the 2015 Appropriations Act (Session Law 2015-241) passed last year: 1. Cape Fear Estuarine Resource Restoration section [14.6.(h)] which considers the removal of a portion of the New Inlet Dam, or “the rocks,” at the Zeke’s Island Reserve, which is part of the North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve; and 2. Study further efficiencies in organization of Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) section [14.31.(a-b)] which considers transferring additional agencies, divisions, and programs to DNCR for potential efficiency, cost savings, and alignment of core mission and values. The Coastal Reserve is one of the programs listed for potentially transferring.

Reports on both sections were submitted to the General Assembly in April 2016 and are located at the web links below. The Cape Fear Estuarine Resource Restoration report outlines the steps the DEQ took to implement the legislation. It is not a study of the proposal to consider removal of the Southern Component of the New Inlet Dam, nor does it provide any recommendations regarding the proposal. The efficiencies study report recommends not transferring the Coastal Reserve program from DEQ to DNCR at this time.

The Department is awaiting further direction from the General Assembly on both sections of these sections of the 2015 Appropriations Act.

Cape Fear Estuarine Resource Restoration: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-hot-topics/reports>

Organizational Efficiencies: [http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/BCCI-6658/April%2012/Reports/7\\_DNCR%20Further%20Efficiencies%20with%20DEQ%20and%20WRC.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/BCCI-6658/April%2012/Reports/7_DNCR%20Further%20Efficiencies%20with%20DEQ%20and%20WRC.pdf)

- *NCNERR Management Plan Update*

Staff are continuing to write the full draft management plan update for the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve. Writing has taken longer than anticipated due to current workloads and receiving additional clarity on NOAA management plan guidance requirements and the various reviews needed. The immediate next step is for NOAA to review the initial draft plan. The Reserve will then seek input from the LACs, N.C. Coastal Resources Commission, and the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality. NOAA will then review the final draft management plan. A 30-day public comment period and three public meetings will be held on the final draft management plan prior to the plan’s final publication. Staff anticipate the plan coming to the LACs for their review later this year.

- *LAC Community Member Appointments*

Community members serving on the local advisory committees whose terms expired in December 2014 per the Local Advisory Committee Operating Procedures document will remain on the committees through December 2017 to ensure continuity on the committees throughout the NCNERR Management Plan update process. An application and appointment process will be undertaken in 2017 for community member seats.

- *Budget*  
The NCNERR will receive \$619,322 from NOAA for operation of the program during next fiscal year, up \$24,872 from last year. Funds will be used to incorporate funding for temporary staffing positions into the annual budget rather than relying on a variety of different funding sources that vary from year to year.
- *Periodic Rules Review*  
The Coastal Reserve's rules, 07O, are scheduled to be reviewed by the Rules Review Commission in June 2017 as part of Periodic Review and Expiration of Existing Rules process (G.S. 150B-21.3A). To meet this deadline, staff classified each rule citation in 07O as necessary with substantive public interest, necessary without substantive public interest, or unnecessary per G.S. 150B-21.3A (c)(1), and sought input from the local advisory committee on the draft classifications. Committee input received by staff is summarized in the table attached to these minutes. Next steps include summarizing input received from the 10 local advisory committees, seeking input on the draft classification from the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission and the Department of Environmental Quality prior to the draft classification being published for a 60-day public comment period.

#### **Site Update – New Business (Paula Gillikin)**

- *Shoreline Change Presentation*  
Ken Richardson, Shoreline Management Specialist for the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, gave a presentation on horizontal shoreline change at the Rachel Carson Reserve and surrounding area. He focused on an area of interest at the western end of Bird Shoal that Reserve staff, local researchers, and citizens are interested in learning more about given that high tide and storm events have caused overwash in the area. The area of interest has mostly maintained its width, but it has moved north significantly over the past few decades.
- *Feral Horse Herd*  
The horse herd remains at 33 to 34 individuals. During the winter and early spring, six mares were contracepted and the body condition of each individual was assessed with the assistance of two N.C. State students.
- *Grounded Vessel*  
The owner of the vessel that washed ashore at Town Marsh in October of 2015 did not respond to communication initiated by the Reserve. The vessel was eventually transferred to the ownership of another citizen and was removed by Sea Tow in mid-February of 2016.
- *2016 Public Field Trip Series*  
The Reserve's annual public field trip series will begin in mid-June and end in August. The trips are free and are held from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The schedule can be found online under the Reserve's education link.
- *Bird Monitoring*  
In December 2015, the annual Christmas Bird Count was held and John Fussell has recently been conducting International Shorebird Surveys at Bird Shoal. During the summer of 2016, surveys will be conducted for nesting piping and Wilsons plovers. Additionally, we will be conducting a repeat

breeding survey of American oystercatchers in partnership with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

### **Roundtable Discussion**

- Committee members discussed the need for elevation data in addition to horizontal shoreline change data to better understand and to potentially inform future management actions.
- Some committee members are concerned that the widening of Beaufort Inlet has caused significant changes in the shoreline at Bird Shoal.
- John Fussell is concerned about the extent of loss of bird foraging habitat (intertidal flats) since the 1970s.
- Charlie Burgess expressed the Town's commitment to better understanding shoreline change at Bird Shoal and offered that the Town could provide resources to help the Reserve gather elevation data.
- Ben Wunderly suggested that modeling might be a good option to predict how and when Bird Shoal might move far enough north that it starts to merge with northern higher elevation part of the site. Ben Wunderly explained that even though we can model what might happen with shoreline change, our management plan and other governing laws and policies direct the Reserve Program to "protect" the site. He acknowledged that this could involve action or no action and either way, citizens will be concerned about "keeping it natural" or "taking action via management."
- Stan Rule suggested that it might be worthwhile to better understand the movement of sand that is just offshore of Bird Shoal.
- Several committee members suggested that it might be useful to look at elevations across the entire site (not just Bird Shoal) as it relates to the island serving as a protective barrier to the Town. A more holistic approach to looking at change would be more appropriate and should include analysis of many contributing factors such as inlet width, sand resources offshore of Bird Shoal, erosion rates, etc.
- Robin Newton and Stan Rule inquired about funds that might be available for gathering more data on shoreline and elevation change at Bird Shoal.
- Perry Barrow asked if there is a way to help the birds, plants, and other interests of the island even though they may be temporary fixes in the face of shoreline and elevation change?

### **Public Comment**

- Niels Lindquist expressed concern that the committee was not addressing a lot of problems through their discussion on the shoreline change topic. Due to inlet widening, rising water levels, and increased wave energy, Bird Shoal and other areas in the Reserve are rapidly eroding and this is causing the Town of Beaufort to be more vulnerable. He suggested the need for a deep and broad analysis of the issue, not just 20 or 30 years of shoreline and elevation.
- Clammerhead Cessna described his recent and historical observations of shoreline change at Bird Shoal and described how the recent rapid change (erosion, sand transport northward, elevation loss) could lead to tragic consequences.

- Rett Newton explained how un-manned aerial vehicles (drones) operated by Duke University's Marine Robotics and Remote Sensing lab, can gather data on shoreline change. He expressed a willingness to work with the Reserve to this end.

**Action Items**

- Paula Gillikin will send out Ken Richardson's shoreline change presentation to committee members and anyone else who requests a copy.

Rule Section	Rule Citation	Rule Name	Agency Draft Determination [150B-21.3A(c)(1)a]	Local Advisory Committee Input on Draft Determination
<b>SECTION .0100 - GENERAL PROVISIONS</b>	15A NCAC 07O .0101	STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	Necessary with substantive public interest	Agree
	15A NCAC 07O .0102	DEFINITIONS AS USED IN THIS SUBCHAPTER	Necessary without substantive public interest	Agree
	15A NCAC 07O .0103	RESPONSIBILITIES: DUTIES OF THE COASTAL RESERVE PROGRAM	Necessary without substantive public interest	Agree
	15A NCAC 07O .0104	STATE AND LOCAL COASTAL RESERVE ADVISORY COMMITTEES	Necessary without substantive public interest	Agree
	15A NCAC 07O .0105	RESERVE COMPONENTS	Necessary without substantive public interest	Agree
<b>SECTION .0200 - MANAGEMENT: USE AND PROTECTION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL RESERVE</b>	15A NCAC 07O .0201	MANAGEMENT PLAN	Necessary without substantive public interest	Agree
	15A NCAC 07O .0202	RESERVE USE REQUIREMENTS	Necessary with substantive public interest	Agree